

critical digest

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Edited by Ted M Kraus



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The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter Digest Service for College & Community Theatre Depts, Groups, Libraries-\$25 per yr

This Week in NYC

A six way partnership of the public, benefactors, corporations, unions, local and federal government to support the performing arts urged by Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg in his Metropolitan Opera arbitration report. A diversity of sources of funds and federal subsidies on a local "matching" basis would assure freedom for the artist, he explained. Report also backed establishment of Federal Council on the Arts to consider increasing tax deductions for contributions to the arts, providing special tax provision for artists, and the possible collection and use of royalties by the Federal government on music on which copyrights have expired (estimated at \$6.5 million yearly.) Though report expressed Goldberg's own views, it is felt that it will be the basis for proposed Congressional legislation.

Plays

Shows that closed include--
An Evening With Yves Montand after 55 and Blood Sweat and Stanley Poole after 84 performances... Irma La Douce to close Dec 31 after 527 performances... The Egg by Felecién Marceau, now in Chicago, to open Jan 8 at Cort... Sunday in New York to move Jan 3 to Golden... No Strings orchestra to be on-stage with some members as extras and in chorus... Fun Couple adaptation by Neil Jansen and John Haase of latter's novel to star Jane Fonda in Apr, presented by Jay Julien.

Players

Nancy Olson to sub for Barbara Bel Geddes, Mary Mary, during latter's Feb vacation... Thomas Ruisinger added to Captains and the Kings... Polly Rowles to be featured in No Strings... Kathleen Widdoes to make NY musical debut in We Take the Town... Moss Hart, 57, died of heart attack in Palm Springs, Calif.

NYC Calendar

First Love-Morosco-12/25
Roger Stevens-Frederick Brisson present Samuel Taylor's adaptation of Romain Gary's autobiography, directed by Alfred Lunt with Lili Darvas, Hugh O'Brian, Rex Thompson.

Ross-O'Neill 12/26. David Merrick presents play by Terence Rattigan directed by Glen Byam Shaw with John Mills. John Williams Thomas Newman.

Subways Are for Sleeping-St James 12/26. David Merrick presents musical based on Edmund Love's book with music by Jule Styne, book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, direction and choreography by Michael Kidd, with Sydney Chaplin, Carol Lawrence, Orson Bean, Phyllis Newman.

The Night of the Iguana-Royale- 12/28. Charles Bowden presents play by Tennessee Williams directed by Frank Corsaro with Bette Davis, Margaret Leighton, Alan Webb.

Madame Aphrodite-Orpheum (126 Second Av) 12/29. Barker-Baer-Chambers present musical with book by Tad Mosel, music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, directed by Robert Turoff with Nancy Andrews, Jack Drummond.

Playhouses

Hudson Theatre sale by NBC to parking garage owner is reported to have fallen through, though house is not available for bookings.

Broadway Business

Variety reports big dip in pre-Christmas week business, as expected, with sellouts at only--How to Succeed, Milk and Honey, Shot in the Dark. Excellent business predicted for holiday week.

Off Broadway

Not While I'm Eating closed after its first performance... Toinette closed after 31 performances, with plans to re-open in Mar at new E 4th theatre of author-producer J. I. Rodale... Brecht on Brecht revised version of Nov 14 Greater NY Chapter ANTA matinee program with Dane Clark, Anne Jackson, Lotte Lenya, Viveca Lindfors, George Voskovec, directed by Gene Frankel will be presented for limited run at Theatre De Lys Jan 3 by Cheryl Crawford... Strindberg's The Creditors will replace twin-bill of early O'Neill plays Jan 15 at Mermaid, directed by Paul Shyre, group returning to O'Neill repertory in Feb... From the Second City to swap casts and sketches between their new W 4th St cabaret-coffee house and their Chicago cabaret theatres... A Stage Affair, 1950 Paul Crabtree written-directed-produced-acted production to be revived by Crabtree Jan 16 at Cherry Lane with Larry Pressman in leading role.

NY Shakespeare

NYC Board of Estimate okayed \$50,000 request by NY Shakespeare Festival for 80 performances of Julius Caesar starting Feb 15 at Heckscher Theatre (103 & 5th Av) and at various high school auditoriums... George T. Delacorte, Dell Publishing Co, to present \$50,000 lighted fountain for lake next to troupe's new Central Park amphitheatre.



*Season's Greetings from "CD" *

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Signs Along the Cynic Way-Actors Playhouse (100 Seventh Ave S.)- 12/14. 3 pro-News, Post, World Telegram & Sun- 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Mirror, Journal American- filed on three person revue with Dolly Jonah, Will Holt, Robert Barend, material by Holt & Jonah, directed by Walt Witcover, presented by Precarious Productions (Holt & Jonah.) Affirmative votes were mild approval, while negative votes were against material, rather than performers, two thought it would be better in night clubs. Holt was compared by two critics to Robert Morse, by one to George Gobel, and by another as a college undergraduate. Davis, News, enjoyed amusing little revue with lots of chuckles. Watts, Post, liked modest, unpretentious, inventive, though never brilliant, yet always disarming show. Nadel, WTS, suggested re-editing of material, but so enjoyed the delightfully, bell-ringing array of talent that he will go again. Negative viewer Esterow, Times, didn't think show had enough wit and variety to make it really entertaining in the theatre, though it might be alright for night clubs. Kerr, Herald Tribune, felt the cast seemed nice, but found everything in the evening unfinished. Coleman, Mirror, thought as a half-hour night club act with drinks it was worthwhile, but not two hours in a theatre without juice. McClain, Journal American, admitted it wasn't as bad as the title sounds, still only pretty mild entertainment most of the time.

All Kinds of Giants-Cricket (162-Second Av) 12/18. 6 con- No Mirror review printed-filed on musical with book and lyrics by Tom Whedon, music by Sam Pottle, presented by Noel Weiss, directed by Peter Conlow with Richard Morse, Claiborne Cary, Bill Hinnant. Most expressed mild approval of music and cast, but blamed book and direction for being dull, unfunny and amateur. News reviewer okayed it for children, not adults. Hinnant as the five foot four giant drew several raves. Funke, Times, listed it as an occasionally clever, occasionally tedious escapade. Kerr, Herald Tribune,, found a good bit of talent skittering loose but all too fey with whimsy blowing like gale through the castle. Davis, News, who okayed it for kids, thought adults could not forgive the crude wisecracks. Watts, Post, doubted if it ever succeeded in escaping from the atmosphere of amateur theatricals, inspite of some pleasant music and players. McClain, Journal American, also found some merit, but thought it all too darn small even for the tiny playhouse it is in. Nadel, WTS, panned it as self-conscious whimsy with endless opportunities for play-doctoring at the professional and amateur levels.

Poppa Is Home- Gate (162-Second Av)- 12/20. 5 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Post, World Telegram & Sun, Journal American- filed on play by Dr. Monroe Schneider, a chiropractor from Middletown, Penn, presented by Quaker Productions, directed by Robert T. Seymour (former director of Harrisburg Penn, Community Theatre). Reviewers agreed script was soap opera, one even suggesting it was good TV soap opera. Cast included Theo Goetz (TV soap opera veteran), Walter Miller, Adelaide Klein, Estelle Ritchie. Most of the slight praise went for Fred Sammut's living room set. Taubman, Times, marked it soap opera blues trapping capable actors. Crist, Herald Tribune, praised first night audience and cast for keeping a straight face for the just folks soap opera. Herridge, Post, suggested acting and direction were not bad by TV soap opera standards in the otherwise folksy tear jerker. O'Connor, Journal American, rated play sad, acting gloomy, direction dejected and playwrighting downright woeful. Alpert, WTS, vetoed artless alloy of Freud, American - Jewish culture, and humanism with impressive beliefs exhibited by both author and cast.

Not While I'm Eating- Madison Av Playhouse (120 Madison Av)- 12/20-12/20. 7 con-unanimous- filed on revue with sketches and lyrics by Arthur Sherman, music by Arthur Siegel, presented by David Silberstein, directed by Warren Enters with Buzz Holliday, Wisa D'Orso, Hal Buckley. Show closed after its first performance. Reviewers panned material as dull, lacking in humor and talent, most excused the cast, the Herald Tribune review didn't even mention the players. Calt, Times, marked it astonishingly inept. Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, complained it was inhuman to subject a roomful of spectators to two hours of unrelieved witlessness. Davis, News, thought some personable, talented players were let down by dull material. Coleman, Mirror, compared it to a sophisticated high school frolic. Watts, Post, blasted it as the Bella of intimate revues, heavy-handed all the way through. Nadel, WTS, agreed with colleagues who thought players better than material in tiresome show. McClain, Journal American, felt it hard to judge the cast in the feeble and unfunny sketches.

Dark Lady of the Sonnets-East 74(334 E 74)- 12/14 3 pro- Times, Herald Tribune, World Telegram & Sun- and 1 con- Journal American- filed on new curtain raiser to the Phoenix production of Androcles and the Lion, replacing the Polish play The Policeman. Trio of affirmatives all enjoyed what they considered Shaw trifle, ably down by Patricia Falkenhain, Frederic Warriner, Alison Howard, directed by Tom Gruenwald. Sole negative was on lesser work of Shaw with the direction allowed to take its natural course.

The Curate's Play- St George Protestant Episcopal Church (16th St & Styvesant Park)-12/17. 2 pro- Times, World Telegram & Sun- filed on Christmas drama by Nathaniel Banks, directed by Malcolm Black with George Grizzard, Jenifer Heyward, Thomas Barbour. Gelb, Times, and Nadel, WTS, both raved over perfect blending of religion and art in modern morality play presented for three performances only.



NYC

FUTURE

CALENDAR

Captains & The Kings-Playhouse- 1/2...Fortuna-Maidman- 1/3...Brecht on Brecht-De Lys 1/3... Something About a Soldier-Ambassador- 1/4...Moon on a Rainbow Shawl-East 11th- 1/8...The Egg- Cort- 1/8... Who'll Save the Plowbow-East 74-1/9...Rornulus-1/10...Plays for Bleecker St- Circle - 1/11...Giants, Son of Giants- 1/11...Creditors-Mermaid- 1/15...Stage Affair- Cherry Lane- 1/16...Cantilivered Terrace-41st St-1/17...Absence of a Cello- 1/18... Bankers Daughter- Jan Hus- 1/22...Passage to India-1/31

New Faces-Broadway 2/1... Family Affair- 2/3... Old Vic- 2/5...Aspern Papers-Playhouse 2/7...The Umbrella- 2/8...Flying Chaucer- 2/14...Gift of Time- 2/22...Jennie- 2/28...No Strings- Hellinger- 3/1...I can Get It For You Wholesale- 3/7...Isle of Children- 3/14...All-American- 3/19...Come on Strong- 4/4...We Take the Town- 4/5...Queen and Rebels- 4/16...Funny Thing Happened on Way to Forum- 5/3...Happy Happy Happy- 5/3...Bravo Giovanni- 5/19...



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

MOSS HART... Moss Hart's good works will long enrich not only the lives of those who believe the play is the thing, but who admire artists of integrity and devotion, commented Herald Tribune editorial... For the past three decades Hart was instrumental in providing countless evenings of fine entertainment—mostly joyous—for millions of his fellow citizens, stated World Telegram & Sun editorial... Hart's death is a cause of sorrow to innumerable Americans who were enthralled by his magic, he never forgot that he was once poor, he never permitted fame to diminish his humanity, sums the Journal American editorial... Hart had and gave a good time everywhere, noted Atkinson, Times... Marvellous is the description of Hart set by Kerr, Herald Tribune... Hart had planned to be playwright in residence this summer at Univ of Denver.

GOLDBERG PROPOSALS... Congress would be well advised to take a fair and thorough look at Arthur Goldberg's set of proposals for Federal subsidizing of the performing arts, suggests Journal American editorial. Paper would like to hear the pros and cons discussed by professionals in the performing arts... Secretary Goldberg's backing of Sen. Fulbright's plan to have the government take over expired music copyrights for performing arts projects worries Phillips, Mirror. If nation is in a crisis would the government order all orchestras to play only the old tunes?

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Insistence of a number of pundits that modern tragedy refuses to adhere to the rules laid down by Aristotle, is pedantic and culturally snobbish, labels Watts, Post... Such playwrights as Genet, Becket, Ionesco, Gelber often perpetuate a vast fraud on the public, fears McClain, Journal American who defies the authors in many instance to state with any clarity what they are trying to prove... Producers who did not start their opening nights at the announced 7 30 or 8 PM curtain time would be fined by Sobol, Journal American... Who can but feel a twinge of sorrow at the closing of Three Penny Opera, asks "Topics", Times.

CHECKING THE ADS... The irked Off Broadway producer (J I Rodale-'Toinette) who wasted \$2000 buying a big ad to argue with the reviewers who didn't approve of his show should have spent the money on Yale baskets for the needy instead, pans Winchell, Mirror... Watts, Post, wonders how many of the men of distinction pictured in the 'Toinette' ads bothered to see it.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Shakespeare would have been proud of Alfred Drake's portrayal of Kean predicts a Herald Tribune reader who panned Kerr as a hater of theatre... News readers think it unfair to handle out free TV tickets in Times Square.

HITS REVISITED... The Caretaker is an evening of minute movement with much meaning, as resoundingly satisfying at second look as it had been the first, rates Nadel, World Telegram & Sun.

ADVICE TO PLAYWRIGHTS... Stay healthy, read everything and see everything, Samuel Taylor, First Love author, told Keating, Times, as his advice to young playwrights. They were advised to especially see the flops if they want to understand the difference between a successful play and a failure.

Black Nativity isn't theatre, but it is the best new Off Broadway show in an awful week. Actually it is an exuberant Gospel Song concert presented by two excellent groups. They can be forgiven if they were misinformed about exactly who is supposed to do the dancing in the aisles. They ignored the childish dance mime, with scant text to match, shouting and singing past this nonsense as if it wasn't there. The result is a happy combination of reverence and entertainment.

All Kinds of Giants is a lame attempt at a whimsical, topical fairy tale, not bright enough for adults, not lively enough for children. It does feature some charming, talented actor-singers and a few nice songs. The few funny thoughts on view are spread and stretched, and are hardly worth the long wait. Minus the inane dialogue the pleasant songs and literate lyrics might make a neat 40 minute musicale.

Signs Along the Cynic Way is a modest three person, 50 sign night club revue that does not contain enough solid material for a short night club act, much less a full evening of theatre. Two songs written and presented by Will Holt are original and show song-writing talent, but none of the sketch material can match this.

Poppa Is Home is a bagful of woe which is probably a faithful plot translation of a modern Yiddish tragedy, but with none of the built-in warmth, humor and sympathy of the species. Instead it is presented by another vastly uneven Off Broadway cast as a trite, sad tale that any daily newspaper lovelorn columnist could clear up in half a column.

Mr. Goldberg, please don't muck around with the tax laws. It is the current tax deduction rules for business losses that has resulted in the amateur, vanity vein Off Broadway this season. Literary efforts that wouldn't make good wrappers for fish have been presented at \$15,000 plus each for the simple reason that the money invested would otherwise have gone for taxes. Many professional and business men need slight encouragement to donate to the arts, but they do need a guide to "good taste."

Free advice to program writers. Don't make it too easy for the critics to pan a bad show just because the biographies of the authors in the program admit they were former (a) college revue writers and/or (b) TV writers. Make the aisle-sitters earn their fee by thinking up original reasons for disliking the given production.

If Off Broadway continues with its present trend of vanity productions outnumbering honest, professional productions three to one, a new form of payola may be invented by the reviewers and agents assigned to cover every new production. They may find it worth their sanity to pay the producers of admitted second-rate material NOT to open.



OUTER
BROADWAY
THEATRE
LETTER

College Theatre

Catholic Univ, Washington, D. C. established Players' Plan to provide on-the-job training for the best student actors chosen from 22 Catholic colleges. Winners will get \$1000 grants the first year to cover part-time tuition, and will tour the second year with Catholic Univ. National Touring Co.

Brandeis Univ, Waltham, Mass, named Louis Kronenberger as chairman of its Creative Arts Award Commission. . . US Office of Education, Washington, D. C. has named Dr. Harold Dean Cater as arts consultant to help colleges develop programs in the arts.

College theatre groups of St. Teresa College, Minn; Univ of Notre Dame and St Mary's College, South Bend, Ind; Baylor Univ, Univ of S. Calif at Berkely and UCLA applauded by Julie Hayden in Times' letter. Actress-widow of George Jean Nathan suggested that such professional theatre groups, at which she was recently a guest artist, should graduate its drama majors as Junior Equity members. She also suggested that a network of such groups acquire a NYC showcase theatre.

Summer Playhouses

Williamstown, Mass, Summer Theatre, to continue to be presented at Williams College Adams Memorial Theatre for another three seasons. Nikos Psacharopoulos, Yale Univ, re-elected by Board of Directors, as executive director.

Winter Repertory

Royal Poinciana Playhouse, Palm Beach, Fla program for Feb includes---Bells Are Ringing with Celeste Holm Feb 5, Hocus-Pocus comedy by Hermione Gingold and Mel Dinelli with Gingold Feb 12, Put It in Writing revue by Bud McCreery and Bill Dana on Feb 19, Under the Yum Yum Tree with Russell Nype Feb 26... Coconut Grove Playhouse, Miami Beach, features Nype in Bye Bye Birdie Dec 26... Happy Days recent Off Broadway production with Ruth White to be presented Jan 12 only at McCarter Theatre, Princeton, NJ.

Shakespeare

Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland, opens 22nd season Jul 21 to Sept 2. Henry IV, Part 2, directed by Edward Brubaker, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, Penn, As You Like It, directed by Jerry Turner, Humboldt State College, Arcata, Calif, Comedy of Errors directed by Whitman College, Spokane, Wash, and Coriolanus directed by J H Crouch, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, to be presented in repertory.

The Gondoliers to be presented Jul 6-Aug 18 at Stratford, Ont, Shakespeare Festival, third in series of Gilbert & Sullivan works.

Road Shows

Do Re Mi to open national tour in Jan in Toronto, followed by Feb re-opening of McVickers Theatre, Chicago.

London

The Cherry Orchard production of Royal Shakespeare Theatre, London, with John Gielgud, Peggy Ashcroft, directed by Michel Saint-Denis split London critics with some raving and some panning production, but not actors. . . Photo Finish by Peter Ustinov to be directed by Laurence Olivier Apr 25 . . . Blood of the Bambergs by John Osborne, a satirical fairy story of a royal wedding, to be presented in the spring.

Paris

Theatre Gymnase presenting alternate evening productions of Marriage Go Round and Françoise Sagan's Les Violons, Parfois. As both are hits, one will move.

Edinburgh Festival

Royal Shakespeare Theatre will make first appearance at Edinburgh International Festival next season with the world premiere of a new play, a Shakespeare production, and one other production.

Seattle World's Fair

Between the Lines musical romance set in the South during the Civil War by William Stuart Wheeling will be presented in Apr at Seattle World's Fair prior to tryout tour and Broadway production by Richard Rector.

Australia

Advise and Consent with Barbara Eden to be presented next year.

Europe

West German theatre managers protesting ban on Brecht productions. . . Oberammergau, Germany, Passion Play will be revised for next production, first time since 1860. . . The Connection to be included in repertory of Piccolo Theatre, Florence . . . The Devil's Advocate, the Madwoman of Chaillot, Hamlet to be translated and presented in Madrid this season.

Current Road Tours

Captains and the Kings-Ford's Baltimore 12/25

Family Affair-Erlanger, Philadelphia- 12/26

Giants, Sons of Giants-Wilbur Boston 12/26

New Faces of 1962-Shubert-New Haven 12/28

Romulus-Walnut, Philadelphia 12/26

Something About A Soldier-Colonial-Boston 12/18

Advise & Consent-Playhouse-Wilmington 12/29

Best Man- Memorial, Louisville-12/28

Bye Bye Birdie-Fisher, Detroit- 12/18

Carnival- O'Keefe, Toronto 12/11

Evening with Yves Montand-Biltmore-12/26

Far Country-Alcazar, San Francisco 12/18

Fiorello!- National, Washington- 12/4

Gypsy- Pabst, Milwaukee 12/28

Miracle Worker- Memorial Dallas 12/29

Taste of Honey- Forrest, Philadelphia 12/25



"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.

